

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Department of Toxic Substances Control
Hazardous Waste Management Program
Permit Renewal Team
9211 Oakdale Avenue
Chatsworth, California 91311

Subject: ☒ DRAFT ☐ FINAL ☐ MITIGATED

Project Title: Permit Renewal for Explosive Ordnance Disposal Range

State Clearinghouse No.:

Project Location: Vandenberg Air Force Base (AFB)

County: Santa Barbara

Project Description:

SITE DESCRIPTION - The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Range is located west of the airfield runways on the northern portion of Vandenberg AFB, California. Defined by a 2,500-foot diameter circular boundary, the EOD Range is approximately 1 mile west of the intersection of Mira and Tangair Roads and 300 feet south of Mira Road. Most of the area defined by this boundary (approximately 1.5 acres) is designated as a buffer zone for safety reasons; the active portion of the range consists of a graded area approximately 200 feet in diameter and directly west of Building 1560. Building 1560 is an earth reinforced bunker used for personnel protection during disposal operations.

EOD RANGE OPERATIONS

The proposed Permit Renewal is for the EOD Range operations at the Vandenberg Air Force Base (AFB). The EOD Range receives unexploded propellant, explosive, and pyrotechnic (PEP) materials. These materials include obsolete ordnance, explosive waste from training operations, materials with an expired shelf life, or explosive waste discovered on base. The PEP materials are detonated in the open at the site, which has been used for this purpose since 1945. Detonations are conducted at a point approximately in the center of the graded area. The EOD Range operations are regulated under the RCRA Part B Permit. In order to allow maximum flexibility for range operations, the permit specifies a maximum of 250 pounds of cased (fragment-producing) explosive or 500 pounds of non-fragment-producing explosive per detonation, or 500 pounds of explosive per day, or 1,500 pounds of explosive per month, or 8,000 pounds of explosive per year.

There are no physical structures or treatment equipment involved in the detonation operation. Every batch of PEP materials that is detonated is carefully prepared, consistent with the Department of Defense (DoD) ordnance disposal technical orders, by highly trained EOD specialists. Since the objective is the complete destruction of the item being detonated, EOD personnel are trained to use ample quantities of the donor charge (i.e., C-4 plastic explosive). Generally, no undetonated materials remain. Any remaining undetonated PEP materials would be detonated again to ensure complete destruction. When the operation is complete there is nothing left except a small crater at the detonation point. Explosive safety requirements established by DoD agencies minimize the potential for any type of mishap. EOD Range operations dictate that no explosives, other than those being disposed of, are located on the site during the disposal activity.

Routine detonations are conducted approximately one to two events per month, and each detonation uses approximately 33 pounds of C-4 explosive. These detonations are conducted on the ground, and sufficient explosive is used so that no visible trace of the items being destroyed remains after the detonation. The explosives are placed such that the force of the explosion is downward into the item being destroyed and into the ground. Generally, the only material thrown upward by the explosions is soil. These explosions create small craters (approximately 2 feet across and 1 foot deep) in the ground. The craters are filled in during re-grading activities, which occur two or three times per year.

In addition to the monthly detonations using C4, twice a year a simulated truck bomb is exploded at the EOD Range for the training purposes which is not a regulated activity and is not part of this permit. The "truck bombs" use a mixture of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil as the explosive. Vehicles (trucks) are obtained from the Defense Reutilization and

Marketing Office (DRMO) and taken to Transportation where all fluids are drained and hazardous materials such as batteries are removed. The vehicles are then towed to the Range where the explosives are placed in them and detonated. Because these detonations are above the ground and not directed, they do not create craters and result in debris being thrown several hundred feet. The debris is later gathered and disposed of as scrap at DRMO.

Finding Of Significant Effect On Environment:

As discussed in the Initial Study sections on Biological Resources, Air Quality, Hydrology and Water Quality in this Initial Study, the project activities will not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. The project will not have impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively considerable. In other words, the incremental effects of an individual project are not considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects. The project will not have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

(An Initial Study supporting this finding is attached.)

Mitigation Measures: None

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Permit Renewal Team Leader Signature		Date
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